

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 07522 231012Z
ACTION EA-09

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD
SUBJECT: PROPOSED NEW FY1979 INITIATIVE: PUBLIC INQUIRY SERVICE

SUMMARY: OUTLINES FEASIBILITY OF REINITIATING PUBLIC INQUIRY
SERVICE IN THE JAPAN MARKET, END SUMMARY.

JW-7-467 RE WALL-7-220-MFO. USTS/TOKYO DOES NOT FEEL THAT INITIATION
OF PUBLIC INQUIRY SERVICE WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR FOLLOWING REASONS:

1. WHILE THE NUMBER OF PERSONS PLANNING U.S. TRIPS INDEPENDENTLY
ARE ON AN INCREASE, WE AND TRAVEL INDUSTRY COLLEAGUES ESTIMATE
OVER NINETY PERCENT OF THE JAPANESE STILL DEPEND ON TRAVEL AGENTS
OR AIRLINES TO MAKE THEIR TRIP ARRANGEMENTS. THEREFORE BY
CONCENTRATING USTS PROFESSIONAL SERVICE SUPPORT ON THE TRAVEL
TRADE, WE CAN BE ASSURED OF GREATLY HIGHER RETURN FOR OUR INVESTMENT.

2. BASED ON OUR EXPERIENCE WITH GENERAL PUBLIC SERVICING OF
SEVERAL YEARS BACK, WE ESTIMATE THAT AN AVERAGE OF 100 OR MORE
WRITTEN, TELEPHONE AND WALK-IN PUBLIC INQUIRIES WOULD BE RECEIVED
PER DAY. ABOUT 75 PERCENT OF THEM WOULD LIKELY BE STUDENTS
AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH STRONG DESIRES REPEAT DESIRES TO VISIT
THE U.S. SOMEDAY BUT WITHOUT NECESSARY FUNDS TO MAKE THE TRIP
WITHIN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. SOME MIGHT MAKE THE TRIP IN TWO
OR THREE YEARS, BUT MANY MIGHT NEVER MAKE IT AT ALL.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 07522 231012Z

3. IN ORDER TO SERVICE THESE INQUIRIES, WHICH WE ESTIMATE WOULD
AVERAGE TEN MINUTES PER INQUIRY, WE WOULD REQUIRE MINIMUM OF
THREE FULL TIME PERSONS. WE WOULD ALSO HAVE TO INVEST IN OFFICE
SPACE IN A CENTRAL LOCATION, HOPEFULLY SEPARATED FROM THE TRADE
SERVIE OFFICE BUT NECESSARILY LOCATED CLOSE BY. CONSIDERING
HIGH RENTAL CHARGES IN ANY SUCH AREA OF TOKYO, COST OF ADDITIONAL

PERSONNEL, UTILITIES AND OTHER OVERHEAD COSTS, NOT TO MENTION INCREASED DEMANDS ON OUR LITERATURE, WE FEEL STRONGLY THAT OPERATING COSTS FOR SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD BE PROHIBITIVE IN VIEW OF EXPECTED LOW RETURNS. IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO DERIVE THE KIND OF COST BENEFIT RATIO EXPECTED OF AN EFFECTIVE USTS PROGRAM.

4. IN ADDITION, INITIATION OF SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD SEEMINGLY CONFLICT WITH THE ONGOING TPC PROGRAM WHICH, IN JAPAN, IS BEGINNING TO WORK MOST EFFECTIVELY. OUR SYSTEM OF DIRECTING PUBLIC INQUIRES TO DESIGNATED TPCS HAS PROVEN MOST SATISFACTORY TO ALL CONCERNED, USTS, THE TPC AND THE INQUIRER.

5. OUR LONG TERM EXPERIENCE AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE JAPANESE MARKET LEAD US TO CONCLUDE THAT FINDING A CONTRACTOR CAPABLE OF PROVIDING THE HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING AND INFORMATION SERVICES REQUIRED WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT, INDEED. WE COULD, OF COURSE, PIONEER THE EFFORT IN HOPES OF STIMULATING SOMEONE OR SOME FIRM INTO GOING INTO THIS TYPE OF BUSINESS. BUT HERE AGAIN WE QUESTION HIGHLY WHETHER THE MANPOWER AND OVERHEAD INVESTMENT WOULD JUSTIFY THE RETURN.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE MARKET AND SHOULD WE, IN THE FUTURE, RECOGNIZE SIGNIFICANT SHIFTS TOWARD INDIVIDUAL TRIP PLANNING AMONG JAPANESE OVERSEAS TRAVELLERS, WE WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN TO RESUME AN APPROPRIATE FORM OF PUBLIC SERVICING AT THE PROPER TIME, WHICH WOULD SUPPORT LOCAL MARKET TRENDS.

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 07522 231012Z

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Executive Order: N/A
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Subject: PROPOSED NEW FY1979 INITIATIVE: PUBLIC INQUIRY SERVICE SUMMARY: OUTLINES FEASIBILITY OF REINITIATING PUBLIC INQUIRY SERVICE IN THE JAPAN MARKET, END SUMMARY.
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